

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Psalms: God's Nurture Of The Inner Man In The Life Of Faith

CXXXIX: Relying On God To Handle Our Most Difficult Relationships, Psalm 139

A. Relying On An Omniscient God To Handle Difficult Relationships

(Psalm 139:1-6, 19-24)

I. Introduction

- A. Some of our relationships with others can be so difficult that we lack the ability to understand how to begin to address them, and we wonder whether we are part of the problem or whether the other party alone is at fault.
- B. Psalm 139 addresses this concern by applying God's omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence to it, with Psalm 139:1-6 in light of verses 19-24 focusing on applying God's omniscience to such difficult relationships:

II. Relying On An Omniscient God To Handle Difficult Relationships, Psalm 139:1-6, 19-24.

- A. The numbering system of the psalm in the Hebrew text matches that of the English Bible (Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 1095), so we stay with the English Bible's numbering system for this lesson.
- B. We then translate Psalm 139:1-6 [in light of verses 19-24] as follows:
 - 1. "For the director of music. Of David. A psalm. O Jahweh, You have thoroughly examined me with the result that You know (all about) me," Psalm 139:1.
 - 2. "You (emph. pron.) know my sitting down and my rising up (an antonymical pair that refer to all of David's activities in his life); Your discern my thought from a distance," Psalm 139:2.
 - 3. "You winnow (carefully analyze) my going out and my lying down (an antonymical pair designating all the activities of David's day) so that You are intimate with all of my ways," Psalm 139:3.
 - 4. "For before there is a word (spoken) by my tongue, You know it completely, O Jahweh," Psalm 139:4.
 - 5. "You hem me in from behind and before (in time) with the result that You laid Your hand on me," v. 5.
 - 6. "Such knowledge is too incomprehensible, wonderful (*pi'l'i*, B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 811) for me; I am not able to attain unto it," Psalm 139:6.
- C. The translation of vs. 19-24 applicable of vs. 1-6 is as follows: "(19) If only You would slay the wicked, O Elohim! Away from me, you bloodthirsty men!" (20) "They speak of You with evil intent; Your adversaries misuse Your name." (21) "Do not I have an aversion to those who hate You, O Jahweh, and abhor those who rise up against You?" (22) "I have only an aversion for them; I count them my foes." (23) "Thoroughly examine me, O Elohim, with the result that You know my heart; test me with the result that You know my anxious thoughts," (24) "and see if there be in me any offensive way, and lead me in the way everlasting."
- D. We note significant observations regarding this psalm (as follows):
 - 1. There is a strong connection between verse 1 and verse 23, the idea of God's thoroughly examining David with the result that He knew all about him, and verse 23 adds the subject of David's anxious thoughts, thoughts full of anxiety due to his relationship with oppressive enemies that he cannot handle, verses 19-22.
 - 2. David was so concerned about having God address the difficult relationships he faced with his enemies that he asked the Lord to apply His omniscient knowledge of him to the difficult situation, that if the problem in the relationship with his enemies actually lay with David, that God might expose it to him that David might confess it to the Lord that he might be led of the Lord in God's everlasting way, v. 23-24.
 - 3. The lesson is powerful: if we are overwhelmed by a very difficult relationship, and we do not know if we are the cause of the difficulty or not, we can trust God to apply His infinite attribute of omniscience to examine us thoroughly so as to ascertain the truth about our own hearts toward having Him expose what possible sin might lie in us that we might confess it to Him. God can then lead us in His way of blessing.
 - 4. God's omniscience as described in verses 2-6 is to be noted: (a) He knows all about our activities in life, all about our activities in a typical day to where, even before we speak a word, God has complete knowledge of it, v. 2-4. (b) Also, God has hemmed us in from behind -- that is, our past -- and from before -- that is, our future -- and He has laid His hand on us in the present much as one might grab a bird in the bush before it can take off to fly, so God's knowledge of us is even contextual as to the times of our lives!

Lesson: David relied on God's infinite omniscience to examine him thoroughly with the result that God knew him thoroughly to ascertain if David needed to make any adjustment to attain God's blessing in difficult relationships.

Application: May we rely on God's omniscience to evaluate our hearts toward correcting us as needed for blessing, especially relative to addressing troubling relationship trials we face that we find too hard in ourselves to handle.